

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L JERUSALEM 1918

LIMDIS

CAIRO FOR SECRETARY'S PARTY

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, JO, IS, PLO

SUBJ: NUZEIBEH ACCEPTS PLO REPRESENTATION

SUMMARY. ANWAR NUZEIBEH, LEADING EAST JERUSALEM SUPPORTER OF HUSSEIN, HAS TOLD ME HE ACCEPTS PLO AS PALESTINIAN REPRESENTATIVE. HE BELIEVES, HOWEVER, THAT PLO CONCEPTS OF DEMOCRATIC UNITARY

STATE AMK NATIONAL AUTHORITY CANNOT BE BASIS OF NEGOTIATION WITH ISRAELIS. HE THINKS SOME IN FATAH ARE PREPARED FOR TERRITORIAL COMPROMISE, AS ARE MANY WEST BANKERS. HE SUGGESTS ISRAELIS ENTER PRIVATE EXPLORATORY DIALOG WITH PALESTINIAN LEADERS. HIS NEW TACK SUGGESTS POSSIBILITY THAT SUCH MODERATE NOTABLES MAY BE PREPARED TO PLAY ROLE IN PLO-OREINTED PALESTINIAN AFFAIRS. END SUMMARY.

1. I HAD LONG TALK NOV 3 WITH ANWAR NUZEIBEH, LEADING EAST JERUSALEM KIGNITARY KNOWN AS HUSSEIN LOYALIST, AND LINE HE TOOK
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HAD UNDERGONE SOME INTERESTING CHANGES SINCE I LAST SAW HIM

WHEREAS HE HAD HELD STRONGLY IN PAST TO NEED FOR JORDANIAN SOLUTION, AND DEPRECIATED PALESTINIAN LEADERSHIP, HE NOW SAID HE ACCEPTED PLO AS REPRESENTATIVE OF PALESTINIANS. HE BELIEVED RABAT SUMMIT DECISION AND HUSSIEN'S CONSEQUENT RENUNCIATION WERE ESSENTIALLY IRREVERSIBLE.

2. NUSEIBEH ARGUED THAT PLO HAS BEEN LEGITIMATE REPRESENTATIVE OF PALESTINIANS SINCE IT WAS FOUNDED IN 1964. HE HIMSELF ATTENDED FOUNDING CONFERENCE. IN HIS MIND THE ISSUE HAS NOT BEEN WHO REPRESENTED PALESTINIANS BUT WHETHER PALESTINIAN QUESTION SHOULD BE DEALT WITH AT THIS STAGE. HE HAD HOPED FOR FOCUS ON IMPLEMENTING RES 242, LEAVING PALESTINIAN QUESTION UNTIL LATER. THIS WAS NOT TO BE, HE CONCEDED, AND THUS IT MADE SENSE FOR PLO TO TAKE UP ACTIVE REPRESENTATION ROLE.

3. I NOTED THAT PLO SPOKESMAN ABU MAYZAR, IN POST-SUMMIT STATEMENT STILL PROCLAIMED DEMOCRATIC STATE IN PALESTINE AS STRATEGIC GOAL. NUSEIBEH ACKNOWLEDGED THAT THIS WAS STILL PLO LINE, AND THAT ISRAEL COULD HARDLY BE EXPECTED TO NEGOTIATE ON SUCH A BASIS. HE ALSO CRITICISED NATIONAL AUTHORITY CONCEPT AS DESIGNED TO EVADE ACCEPTING FINALITY OF A TERRITORIAL SETTLEMENT. ISRAEL WOULD CLEARLY NOT ACCEPT THAT EITHER. WILLINGNESS TO AGREEE TO TERRITORIAL DIVISION OF PALESTINE WAS THE CRUCIAL ISSUE FOR PLO. HE UNDERSTOOD GROUP WITHIN FATAH WAS PREPARED FOR THIS. WEST BANKERS GENERALLY WERE MORE READY FOR IT THAN BEIRUT LEADERSHIP. THOSE AMONG THEM WHOSE HOMES WERE IN ISRAEL WERE LESS SO, BUT HE OBSERVED THAT EVEN HIS WIFE, WHO COMES RALE REGION (NEAR TEL AVIV) AND IS NOTED PALESTINIAN NATIONALIST FIREBRAND, NOW CONCEDED THAT TERRITORIAL COMPROMISE WAS ONLY PRACTICABLE COURSE.

4. HE THOUGHT THAT, IN THE END, PALESTINIANS MIGHT WELL SETTLE FOR SUCH A COMPROMISE IF UN RES 194 COULD BE IMPLEMENTED, GIVING REFUGEES RIGHT TO RETURN OR COMPENSATION. HE WONDERED WHETHER ISRAELIS COULD NOT INFORMALLY APPROACH PALESTINIAN LEADERS, AS THEY HAD DONE WITH JORDANIANS, TO SEE WHAT GIVE MIGHT BE BEHIND HARD-NOSED PUBLIC POSTURINGS. SOONER OR LATER, HE SAID, ISRAELIS WILL HAVE TO COME TO GRIPS WITH PALESTINIANS.

5. COMMENT: TOO MUCH CANNOT BE MADE OF NUSEIBEH'S NEW TACK, THOUGH WE HAVE HEARD ABOUT IT IN ADVANCE FROM PALESTINIAN
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NATIONALIST WEST BANKER WHO SEEMED TO ASCRIBE SIGNIFICANCE TO IT. IT DOES SUGGEST POSSIBILITY, HOWEVER, THAT NUSEIBEH, AND POSSIBLY OTHER PRO-HASHEMITE NOTABLES, WILL BE PREPARED TO PLAY AN ACTIVE ROLE IN PLO-ORIENTED PALESTINIAN AFFAIRS. THESE ARE MEN OF MODERATE OUTLOOK WHO ISRAELIS KNOW AND HAVE DEALT WITH. IF THEY CAN ESTABLISH THEMSELVES WITH MAINSTREAM OF PALESTINIAN NATIONALISM THEY COULD CONCEIVABLY PLAY BRIDGING ROLE IN THIS POLARIZING SITUATION.

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